DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 188 101 CG 014 499

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TITLE Sex-Role, Self-Concept and Power in Intimate Relationships.
PUB DATE 79
NOTE 13p.; Paper presented at the Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association (87th, New York, NY, September 1-5, 1979).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adults; *Androgyny; Communication (Thought Transfer); Decision Making; *Individual Power; *Influences; Interaction; *Interpersonal Relationship; *Self Concept; Sex Differences; *Sex Role
IDENTIFIERS *Intimacy; Personal Attributes Questionnaire

ABSTRACT

Research with a two-dimensional model of power strategies used in intimate relationships has found that men are more likely to report using direct bilateral strategies, while women are more likely to report using indirect, unilateral strategies. The relationships among sex-role, self-concept, and the power strategies used in intimate relationships were investigated to identify the differences between persons classified as masculine, feminine, undifferentiated, or androgynous by the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ). College students (N=100) completed questionnaires on their background and romantic/sexual relationships in addition to the PAQ. Results indicated that androgynous persons used bilateral strategies such as persuasion, bargaining, and positive affect in getting their way. Undifferentiated persons used unilateral strategies such as emotional withdrawal or pursuing their own ends--regardless. Masculine individuals preferred direct strategies such as asking their partners to do what they wanted, while feminine individuals chose indirect, unilateral strategies such as pouting. Overall findings were consistent with expectations based on definitions of the PAQ types. (Author/HLM)

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Sex-Role, Self-Concept and Power In Intimate Relationships

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Paper presented at 87th Annual Convention of American Psychological Association, New York, 1979.

CG014499

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Sex-Role Self-Concept and Power in Intimate Relationships

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Falbo and Peplau (in press) have developed a two dimensional model of the power strategies used in intimate relationships. In this model, one dimension describes power strategies as varying along a directness continuum which ranges from direct to indirect. The other dimension indicates the extent to which power strategies involve one-sided or two-sided (unilateral vs. bilateral) decision-making. For example, reasoning with one's intimate partner is classified as direct and bilateral, while emotionally or physically withdrawing from one's partner is classified as indirect and unilateral.

Falbo and Peplau (in press) reported that among heterosexual, dating couples, college men and women differed in the types of strategies they reported using in that men were more likely to report using direct and bilateral strategies, while women were more likely to report using indirect and unilateral strategies. The finding that women reported using more indirect strategies than men was consistent with previous research results (Johnson, 1978; Kipnis, 1976). However, the result concerning bilateral strategies was unprecedented. Falbo and Peplau interpreted this gender difference in terms of the balance of power within the intimate relationship. Aided by additional information about power preferences and perceptions, Falbo and Peplau found that bilateral strategies were also reported by people (such as men) who preferred and perceived themselves as having more power than their partner. Conversely, unilateral strategies were reported by people (such as women) who preferred and perceived themselves as having less power than their partner. Therefore, Falbo and Peplau (in press) argued that women's greater use of unilateral strategies can be regarded as related to their lacking influence in intimate relationships.

Given this gender difference in power strategy use, one wonders whether sex-role self-concept would contribute additional information towards understanding power dynamics between men and women in intimate relationships. A previous study examining the relationship between gender, sex-role self-concept and power strategies (Falbo, 1977a) found that feminine people, regardless of gender, reported using more subtlety, emotional manipulation and tears in getting their way than did either masculine or androgynous persons. Otherwise, masculine and androgynous people did not significantly differentiate themselves in terms of strategy use.

However, the Falbo (1977a) study did not focus on strategies used in intimate relationships. Instead, this study concerned open-ended essays written in response to the general question: How I get my way. Further limitations of this study concern biases involved in selecting both the subjects and strategies studied. Subjects were chosen on the basis of cut-off points imposed on a difference score generated by subtracting the subjects'

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scores on the masculinity scale from their scores on the femininity scale. While this was an acceptable approach to classifying subjects at the time (Bem and Korula, Note 1), the use of this procedure limits the generalizability of the sex-role self-concept results obtained in the Falbo (1977a) study because only subjects with extreme scores were placed in the masculine and feminine categories. In addition, the types of power strategies coded, counted, and analyzed in the Falbo (1977a) study were selected on the basis that they were relevant to sex-role stereotypes regarding power use. This selection procedure limits the generalizability of the power strategies results in that one doesn't know how representative the list of power strategies studied by Falbo (1977a) is of those strategies reported by the subjects.

This study was conducted to examine the relationships between sex-role self-concept and the power strategies used in intimate relationships, while avoiding the limitations of the Falbo (1977a) study. In the present study, all subjects, not just extreme cases, were classified into one of four categories (masculine, feminine, undifferentiated, and androgynous) on the basis of their scores on the Personal Attributes Questionnaire (PAQ: Spence & Helmreich, 1978). Further, the power strategies considered in this study were selected on the basis of their frequency of occurrence in open-ended essays, not preconceived sex stereotypes.

Method

Subjects. As part of a larger study of power strategies in intimate relationships, one hundred heterosexual college students (N_{males} = 50; $N_{females}$ = 50) were recruited through their classes at a California university to participate in this research by completing a lengthy questionnaire concerning their background, masculinity-femininity, and "romantic/sexual relationships." Subjects who were currently in such a relationship answered questions about their partner and their relationship. Subjects who were not currently in a relationship answered comparable questions concerning their most recent past relationship.

Women in the sample were significantly older (mean difference: 1.44 years) and described relationships which lasted significantly longer (mean difference: 8.76 months) than men. The mean subject age and relationship duration for men and women in this sample is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Age and Duration by Sex

Sex	Age	Duration
Men	21.20	12.10
Women	22.64	20.86

Note: Age is presented in years; duration, in months. There are significant sex main effects for age, $F(1,98) = 5.40$, $p < .02$, and duration, $F(1,97) = 9.19$, $p < .003$.

The Questionnaire. Subjects spent approximately one hour completing the anonymous questionnaire, either in a small group setting or individually. The first part of the questionnaire concerned the subjects' backgrounds and the second part of the questionnaire focused on a specific "romantic/sexual

relationship." Subjects were asked to think about their intimate partner and write an open-ended essay describing "How I get (got) ___(my partner) to do what I want." Subjects also indicated the duration of the relationship and their own personal satisfaction (on a 9-point scale) with the relationship. In addition, students completed the short form of the PAQ (Spence & Helmreich, 1978).

PAQ Type: Table 2 presents the frequency of each PAQ type in this sample, derived by the median split method described in Spence and Helmreich (1978).

Table 2

Frequency of Each PAQ Type

Sex	Undifferentiated	Androgynous	Masculine	Feminine
Men	8	16	19	7
Women	12	9	9	20
Total	20	25	28	27

This distribution is comparable to that found among college and high school students by Spence and Helmreich (1978).

Data Analysis: As reported in Falbo and Peplau (in press), data analysis consisted of three steps. First, the power essays were read and classified by six coders. A strategy was defined as any behavior or series of behaviors which the subject presented as instrumental in influencing their partners. A strategy type was placed on the list to be studied if the six coders could easily identify instances of it and at least five subjects reported using it. More detailed information about the development of the code is available in Falbo and Peplau (in press). Table 3 gives the names, definitions, and examples of these 13 strategy types.

Table 3

Definitions and Examples of the Code Used to Classify the 13 Power Strategies Found in the Power Essays

Label	Definition	Example
Strategies		
Asking	Agent makes a simple request.	I ask him to do what I want.
Bargaining	Agent does something for target if target will reciprocate.	We usually negotiate something agreeable to both of us. We compromise.
Laissez-Faire	Agent takes independent action; does what he/she wants on own.	We do our own thing. I just do it by myself.
Negative Affect	Agent expresses negative feelings.	I pout or threaten to cry if I don't get my way.
Persistence	Agent continues trying to influence.	I repeatedly remind him of what I want until he gives in.
Persuasion	Agent literally reports using "Persuasion."	I try to persuade him my way is right.

Table 3 (cont.)

Label	Definition	Example
Strategies		
Positive Affect	Agent expresses positive affect.	I smile a lot. I am especially affectionate.
Reasoning	Agent uses reason or logical arguments.	I reason with her. I argue my point logically.
Stated Importance	Agent tells target how important the request is.	I tell him how important it it to me.
Suggesting	Agent makes suggestions or hints.	I drop hints. I make suggestions.
Talking	Agent literally reports talking or having a discussion with partner.	We talk about it. We discuss our differences and needs.
Telling	Agent makes a direct statement of desired outcome.	I tell her what I want. I state my needs.
Withdrawal	Agent withdraws affection, grows silent, becomes cold and distant.	I clam up. I become silent.

Note: This table is also presented in Falbo and Peplau (in press).

Second, nine experts[2] in the field of power strategies or intimate relationships provided the data necessary to create the model of power strategies in intimate relationships used in this study. These experts rated the similarity of each strategy type to every other on a 9-point scale. These ratings underwent a multidimensional scaling (MDS) analysis and the best configuration was selected. This configuration is the model of power strategies in intimate relationships used in this study. The similarity ratings made by the experts underwent a nonmetric individual difference model of MDS (ALSCAL: Takane, Young, and deLeeuw, 1977) identical to that described in Falbo (1977b).

Third, the variables representing characteristics of the participants (such as PAQ type) and the characteristics of their relationships (such as its currentness) underwent a multiple optimal regression analysis (MORALS: Young, deLeeuw, and Takane, 1976) identical to that described by Falbo (1977b). The results of these analyses indicated the relationship between these characteristics and power strategy use. In these analyses, the two stimulus coordinates of the power strategies (one for each dimension within the MDS configuration) were used as the predictor variables and the specific variable under study was the criterion variable. Each power strategy was treated as a case, and the criterion associated with each case was a

[2]The nine experts were: Richard Centers, Toni Falbo, Jacqueline Goodchilds, Paula Johnson, David Kipnis, George Levinger, L. Anne Peplau and Bertram Raven. An additional expert requested to be anonymous.

variable measured in one of two possible ways. With the first way, the variables were continuous. An example of such a variable is the subjects' ratings of their satisfaction with the relationship. With such variables, the criterion variables were the mean scores of all subjects reporting the use of each strategy. With the second type of criterion variable, the variables represented categories of people. With these nominal variables, the criterion variables were the proportion of each category (such as gender) reporting the use of each strategy.

The results of the regression analysis were used to place these variables as vectors in the MDS configuration. Specifically, the b coefficient associated with each predictor variable served as the criterion variable's coordinate for each dimension within the configuration. For example, the b coefficient associated with one predictor variable indicated the placement of the vector on this dimension in the configuration and the b coefficient associated with the second predictor variable indicated the placement of the vector on the second dimension.

Results

The results of the MDS analyses have been reported in detail elsewhere (Falbo & Peplau, in press). However, to aid the reader in understanding the results of the present study, the outcome of this MDS analysis will be briefly presented here.

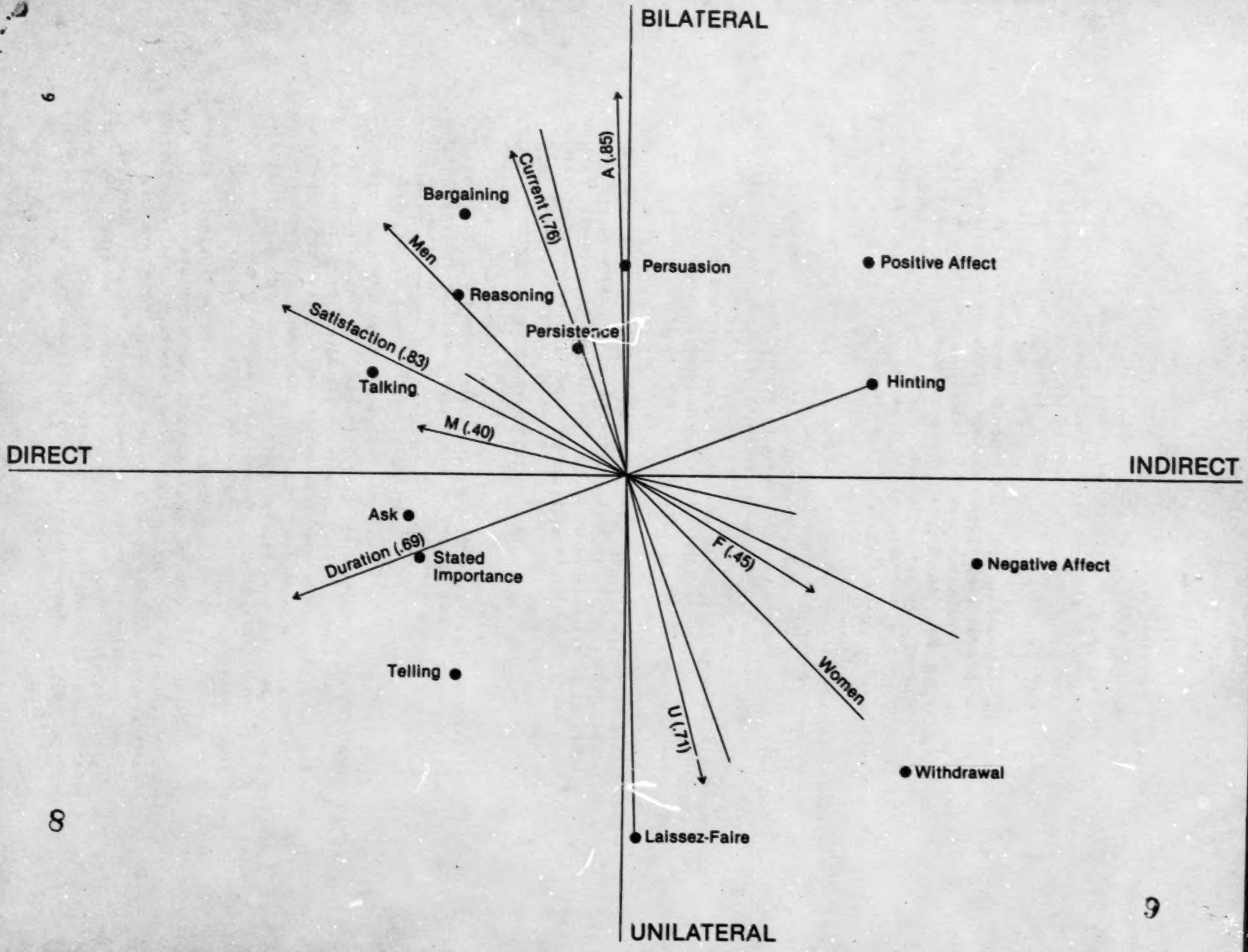
Power Strategies and the Configuration

Of the 100 people in our sample, 85% reported using at least one power strategy. The group as a whole wrote 170 strategies, of which coders were able to classify 96% according to the 13 categories listed in Table 3. The amount of agreement between coders in their use of the power categories was computed by the formula provided by Winter (1973). All agreement scores were above .80.

The experts' ratings of the similarity of the 13 power strategies were analyzed by the multidimensional scaling analysis described in the methods section. Solutions based on one, two, and three dimensions were compared in terms of two criteria: the amount of variance accounted for by that solution and the clarity of interpretation of the results. Based on these criteria, the two dimensional solution appeared preferable; it provided the most readily interpretable solution and accounted for 89% of the variance (compared to 67% for the one dimensional solution and 94% for the three dimensional solution). The two dimension configuration is presented in Figure 1.

The horizontal dimension in Figure 1 is labeled Direct/Indirect. This designation was made on the basis of the placement of particular power strategies in the MDS space. On the right side of this dimension are strategies sharing a common theme of getting one's way indirectly by using positive or negative affect, hinting, or withdrawing. On the left side of the dimension are such strategies as asking, telling, and stating the importance of a request that are more overt and direct means of getting one's way.

The vertical dimension in Figure 1 is labeled Bilateral/Unilateral. This designation is also justified by the placement of particular strategies along this dimension. This dimension is anchored at the top by such interactive strategies as persuasion, bargaining, reasoning and positive affect. These appear to represent two-sided forms of decision-making. The other end


BILATERAL
A (.85)
Current (.76)
Bargaining
Men
Reasoning
Persuasion
Positive Affect
Satisfaction (.83)
Persistence
Talking
Hinting
M (.40)
DIRECT
INDIRECT
Ask
Duration (.69)
Stated Importance
F (.45)
Negative Affect
Telling
Women
U (.71)
Withdrawal
Laissez-Faire
UNILATERAL

of the dimension includes strategies in which the person takes independent action by simply doing what she/he wants. This end of the dimension can best be described as representing one-sided strategies in which one person "calls the shots."

Vectors

Figure 1 presents eight vectors representing the personal characteristics of the subjects and their perceptions of their relationships. Next to the vectors' levels are the R^2s associated with each multiple regression analysis (in parentheses). All R^2s over .60 are significant at $p < .01$. Unless otherwise stated in the text, the relationship between the variable and the configuration is significant at $p < .01$.

The placement of vectors in the MDS configuration indicates the relationship between these variables and power strategy use. That is, the location of the vectors in this study tells us what kind of people and relationships are associated with the use of what kinds of strategies. This interpretation is possible because information about power strategy usage and personal and relationship characteristics was obtained from the same sample.

The variable represented by each vector ranges from highest (closest to arrow) to lowest (farthest from arrow). By drawing the shortest line between each strategy and the vector, one can locate the point on the vector which indicates the rank order of each strategy along the dimension. The strategies closest to the high end of the vector are more likely to be used by people scoring high on this variable. Similarly, the strategies found in the middle or ond of the vector are more likely to be used by people scoring in the middle or end (respectively) of the variable.

Gender and PAQ Type: Although the gender vector (labeled here: Men/Women) is a duplication of the vector presented in Falbo and Peplau (in press), it is portrayed in Figure 1 so that the reader can compare gender and PAQ type differences in power strategy use.

The four PAQ types are represented in Figure 1 as the proportion of androgynous (labeled: A), undifferentiated (labeled: U), masculine (labeled: M), and feminine (labeled: F) subjects reporting the use of each strategy. Like the other vectors, these PAQ type vectors are informative in two ways. First, these vectors indicate the relationship between each PAQ type and power strategy use. Second, these vectors indicate the differences between the PAQ types in their power strategy use. For example, the vectors representing androgynous and undifferentiated subjects run in almost exactly opposite directions. This means that the strategies used by undifferentiated and androgynous people are almost diametrically opposite in type. According to the location of these two vectors, androgynous subjects are more likely to use bilateral strategies, while undifferentiated subjects are more likely to use unilateral strategies.

In contrast, the M vector indicates that masculine subjects are likely to use primarily direct and somewhat bilateral strategies. The F vector runs basically in the opposite direction from the M vector, thereby indicating that feminine subjects are more likely to report using unilateral and indirect strategies. However, because the M and F vectors do not share a significant amount of variance with the configuration, one should be cautious in accepting these results.

Note that the F vector is closest to the U vector and the M vector is closest to the A vector. This means that feminine people use strategies

most like the undifferentiated, while masculine and androgynous people are somewhat alike in their power strategy use. Also note that the directions of vectors representing sex-typed PAQ types are consistent with the gender vector. That is, the F vector lies near that portion of the gender vector representing women. Likewise, the M vector lies near that portion of the gender vector representing men.

Relationship Characteristics: Three vectors portrayed in Figure 1 represent characteristics of the relationships. One is the subject's satisfaction with the relationship. This vector (labeled: satisfaction), as it is placed in the configuration, indicates that more satisfied people report using direct and bilateral strategies, such as reasoning and bargaining. Less satisfied people reported using more indirect and unilateral strategies.

The second relationship vector concerns the duration of the relationship. As portrayed, this vector (labeled: Duration) indicates that subjects describing longer-lasting relationships reported using primarily direct strategies, such as telling their partner what they want. Subjects describing shorter-lasting relationships were more likely to use such indirect strategies as hinting and putting the partner in a good mood.

The third relationship vector concerns the currentness of the relationships. As reported earlier, half the subjects in the sample described a current relationship and half, a past relationship. The location of this vector (labeled: Current) in the configuration indicates that subjects describing current relationships are more likely to report using bilateral strategies, while subjects describing past relationships are more likely to report using unilateral strategies.

Supporting Analyses: In order to determine whether the four PAQ types differed in terms of the three relationship variables, three analyses of variance were conducted. In these analyses, the two independent variables were Gender and PAQ type. No significant main effects or interactions between Gender and PAQ type were found in the satisfaction and currentness variables. Concerning the duration of the intimate relationship, as mentioned earlier, there was a significant gender difference with women reporting longer relationships than men, $F(1,97)=9.19$, $p < .003$. No PAQ type main effects or interactions between PAQ type and Gender were found with the duration variable.

The correlations between satisfaction and duration ($r=.09$) and between duration and currentness ($r=.009$) were not significant. However, the correlation between satisfaction and currentness ($r=.34$) was significant and indicated that people describing current relationships rated them as more satisfactory than people describing past relationships.

Discussion

This study succeeded in portraying the types of strategies used by androgynous, undifferentiated, masculine, and feminine people in influencing their romantic/sexual partners. Specifically, androgynous persons reported using such bilateral strategies as persuasion, bargaining, and positive affect in getting their way. In contrast, undifferentiated people reported using unilateral strategies such as emotionally withdrawing from their partner or doing what they want, anyway. Masculine individuals reported using primarily direct strategies such as asking their partner to do what they want. Conversely, feminine people were more likely to report using indirect and unilateral strategies such as pouting.

Unlike the results for androgynous and undifferentiated people, the

relationships between the variables representing masculine or feminine types and power strategy use were not statistically significant. Therefore, these relationships should be regarded with caution. Nonetheless, the results concerning masculine and feminine people are believable because they are consistent with other results of this study, sex stereotypes, and previous research. That is, feminine people reported using strategies more frequently used by women, and masculine people were found to use strategies associated with men. In addition, these results are consistent with common sex stereotypes that men and masculine people get their way by using direct power strategies, while women and feminine people use more indirect strategies (Johnson, 1976). Finally, the femininity results are consistent with previous research findings (Falbo, 1977a) which indicated that feminine people report using more tears, emotional manipulation and subtlety in influencing people than masculine or androgynous persons.

These results are more meaningful in the light of other findings regarding the balance of power within these relationships. As mentioned earlier, Falbo and Peplau (in press) found that bilateral and direct strategies were more commonly used by people who perceived themselves to have more power in their relationships, while unilateral and indirect strategies were more likely to be used by persons perceiving themselves to have less power in their relationships. Therefore, the strategies typical of androgynous and masculine people are also typical of those with greater power in their relationships. Conversely, the strategies typical of undifferentiated and feminine people are also typical of those with less power in their relationships.

Furthermore, as reported in Falbo and Peplau (in press), the nine experts evaluated the strategies in terms of four dimensions, including good/bad. Analysis indicated that these experts regarded bilateral and direct strategies as better than unilateral and indirect strategies. In view of this information, one could argue that androgynous and masculine individuals use strategies regarded by experts to be better than those used by feminine and undifferentiated people. This interpretation is consistent with the finding that the strategies used by masculine and androgynous persons were also used by people who reported greater satisfaction with the relationship. The reverse was found for undifferentiated and feminine individuals.

Overall, the results concerning the relationships between sex-role self-concept and power strategy use are consistent with what one would expect on the basis of the definitions of the PAQ types. For example, in order to be classified as androgynous, one must have a pattern of masculinity and femininity scores (i.e., high on both scales) which is the reverse of the criteria for being placed in the undifferentiated category (i.e., low on both scales). It is not surprising, then that androgynous people report using strategies that are at the opposite end of the same dimension (bilateral/unilateral) as those strategies used by undifferentiated people. Similarly, feminine people are so classified because they score high on the femininity scale and low on the masculinity scale. In contrast, masculine people are so classified because they show the reverse pattern (high masculinity, low femininity). Therefore, one would expect their use of power strategies to reflect this difference and it does.

Further, the pattern of correlations among the three variables representing characteristics of the relationship is consistent with the placement

of these variables within the power strategy configuration. For example, the vectors representing currentness and duration were the most divergently placed in the configuration and this is consistent with the finding that the correlation between these two variables is the largest of those considered.

Finally, the vectors representing these relationship characteristics all share a somewhat similar direction and location within the configuration. Although they vary considerably along the bilateral/unilateral dimension, these vectors indicate that direct strategies are more commonly used by people engaged in satisfactory, current, and longer relationships.

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